

back into her corner of the bench as if instinctively responding to the repudiation of his first glance.

His reaction was an apologetic embarrassment. He had startled her. She looked like a fluttered wild thing. That would not do at all. He was not the sort who alarmed girls. He rushed into speech.

"I'm awfully afraid I frightened you," he said. "To tell the truth, I didn't see you when I flopped down. I was thinking of something else."

She held her pose in the far corner of the bench, but she still stared at him, and as she did so her slight young figure relaxed and the look of fear left her eyes. She did not speak, however, and for a long moment their glance held while he waited, expecting her to do so. Then self-consciously and feeling much snubbed, he dropped his glance from her face and it took in the surprising fact that on this cold and stormy day the young girl on the bench beside him wore no coat. What he now saw was no longer an offended girl, but a shivering fellow creature, blue with cold, clad in a dark blue gown of the sort Dora had called "one-piece."

Not even a scarf protected the thin young throat from which the neck of the gown was briefly cut away in the familiar lines of the popular fashion. Not daring again to raise his eyes to her face in the light of this discovery, David let them drop to the level of the girl's shoes. They had been well made and shapely little shoes. Now one of them, the right, unconsciously thrust out a little in the girl's quick recoil at his sudden appearance, showed a long split on the side and a glimpse of black stocking.

David sat back in his place, closed his eyes, and deliberately made himself think. He had loved his dead mother and adored his dead sister. He had learned from them to honor women. But he was a city boy, and he was not unsophisticated. He knew quite well the difference between "nice girls" and the other kind, and he realized that the situation of this strange girl on the park bench beside him was, to say the least, anomalous. She might, or might not, be a "nice girl." He recalled his one direct look into her wide, frightened eyes. That, certainly, had been reassuring. She had shown herself so young and so afraid, and she had not responded when he spoke to her. Also, she was shod like a beggar and dressed hardly better than one, though there was a suggestion of one-time smartness of the right kind about the now shabby frock and the close fitting little hat almost covered her brown hair. Her eyes, he recalled, had been brown, too—beautiful eyes they were, but eyes with an odd look in them—something other than the fright he had caused her.

His reflections ended suddenly. They had been checked by an unexpected development. The slight figure, so remote in its corner, though so near, had suddenly drooped, then pitched forward. It would have fallen from the bench but for David's quick grasp, which caught and steadied it. He settled it back against the bench, and then, springing to his feet, stared at it helplessly. Its eyes were closed. Its face was ghastly. Most obviously, even to the mind of a rather suspicious young man, the girl had fainted. She could not simulate that gray pallor, that drawn look around lips and nostrils.

He bent down, seized a handful of snow, and vigorously rubbed her face with it. For a moment he actually thought she had died there beside him. There was no pulse that he could detect, and he had much recent experience with a girl's failing pulse. He stretched the stranger out flat on the bench and continued his rubbing, sending desperate eyeshots up and down the lonely path as he worked, in the hope of seeing a mounted policeman or a pedestrian. But seemingly he and the girl were alone in the world. What was done for her must be done by him. He continued to rub her face, and at last a little color came into it and her brown eyes slowly opened.

For a few instants their expression remained blank. Then fear again rushed into them—a fear so great that the heart of the young man contracted. It drove him into swift, reassuring speech. "Please don't be frightened," he said. "You see, you fainted, and I'm trying to help you. Are you better now?"

She tried to struggle to a sitting position, but fell back weakly. He put a strong arm behind her and helped her to her old position in the corner of the bench. "Better how?" he repeated cheerfully. "Yes—I—think so. Thank you." The girl's voice was weak, but it was also lovely. Her accent and manner were those of a well-bred, well-educated girl of his own class. Henderson's heart leaped at the discovery. In that moment he told himself this girl was all right. Girls who were not "all right" did not speak like that, nor did they allow themselves to starve and freeze. He found at once the words he

knew would most quickly reassure her.

"You must let me do what I can for you," he said in a matter of fact way. "I've had a lot of experience with this kind of thing. My sister was an invalid for a long time and I took care of her. So please let me take you safely to your home and turn you over to some one who will put you to bed for a day or two. Do you think you could walk as far as the nearest park gate?" he added as she did not speak. "We can get a car there, or perhaps I can pick up a taxicab."

She shook her head. There was utter helplessness in the gesture. Then, with a quick breath, she spoke.

"No, no," she said. "Please leave me here. I shall be quite all right."

He began an energetic protest. "But, good heavens, I can't do that!" he pointed out. "It wouldn't be safe. Anything might happen. Just let me take you to your door and see that you get inside. Then I'll clear out."

For another moment she hesitated. Then bluntly, in flat tones, she gave him the truth.

"I haven't any home. I was turned out of it this morning because—because I couldn't pay my rent. I suppose," she went on unsteadily, "you will have to take me to some institution. Would they take me into a hospital, do you think? I'm not really sick, though."

He knew now what was the matter. He understood the gray pallor, the pinched lips and nostrils, the terrible look in the brown eyes. The girl was starving. She had undoubtedly pawned everything she had except, literally, enough garments to clothe her nakedness. She had even parted with her coat. He rose.

"Come," he said. "I'm sure you can walk to the park gate. There is a little restaurant across the street where it will be warm and comfortable. We can have some lunch there and talk things over."

He met her eyes as he spoke, then his own dropped again under the unconscious revelation in hers. For an instant the expression in those brown eyes was nothing short of horrible. It was a thing animal-like in its intensity. As if conscious of it, she turned her face away from him.

"No," she said thickly. "No. I'm all right now. Please go."

But the look had made departure a physical impossibility for Dora Henderson's brother. He could no more leave the girl there alone than if he was bound to her by chains. "See here," he said desperately. "For God's sake look at me and make up your mind to trust me. Don't you see that you can? Let me help you in memory of my sister. She died last week."

She slowly turned to him at this, and he went on eagerly. "It will be she who is helping you, not I. Can't you see that? Come. It's what she would want."

She rose without another word, but for a moment she stood swaying unsteadily, evidently testing her strength. At last she made a slow step forward and he took her arm, supporting her as much as she would let him. Even weak as he now was, he could have carried her slight figure, and he longed to do so, but she was walking more easily, evidently buoyed up by thought of the food and warmth to come. The journey to the gate was not long. In a surprisingly short time they were seated on opposite sides of a small table in one of the ubiquitous chain restaurants where food is good and clean and cheap. The warm, bright room was almost empty, for it was 2 o'clock in the afternoon. In a few moments David's taut nerves relaxed under the satisfying spectacle of his guest eating a thick, hot, nourishing soup and trying to do it slowly and casually. When she had emptied the dish she smiled at him. It was the first time he had seen her smile, and his heart contracted under the pathos of it.

"Why aren't you eating?" she asked, observing the fact for the first time.

"I had my lunch before I came uptown."

David told the lie glibly. He was thinking of the amount of \$2.60, which was all he had in his pockets, save the wonderful check for \$500. Two dollars and sixty cents might not cover a substantial luncheon for two, and this girl must have a substantial luncheon.

"I think some chops should be the next thing in order," he suggested, picking up the menu. She shook her head.

"I'd love them," she confessed, "but I don't dare. You see"—her proud little head dropped under the humiliation of the confession, and a pale flush stained her cheeks—"I—I—haven't eaten for days. I must begin carefully. If I can have some bread and milk that's all I ought to take—and, perhaps, a cup of coffee."

He knew she was right and gave the order.

"We'll have a bangup dinner to-

night," he cheerfully predicted, remembering his check.

As she ate bread and milk he talked keeping resolutely to the facts that would reassure her.

"I know all about these temporary streaks of hard luck," he told the girl, leaning toward her boyishly, his elbows inelegantly on the little table, his dark grey eyes on her face. "My sister and I went through them. We were still going through them when she died. Then today, when I didn't care what happened, I had a streak of luck. I got this."

He took the letter and check from his pocket and showed them to her. He touched on the irony of the belated editorial appreciation. He described his momentary rebellion, his resolution of the morning. He confessed to the sale of his furniture and to his own temporary homelessness. Then he said calmly:

"So, you see, it was all meant to be. Things like this don't happen by chance. When you started out this morning, imagining yourself homeless, your good angel and mine put their heads together. Mine knew what it would mean to me to have someone else to think about and plan for just now. So it's settled, and all you and I have to do is to follow the plan. Right after lunch we will go to the bank and cash this check. We will have just time before the bank closes. Then we'll take a cab and find the right room for you, and after that we'll go out and buy a coat for you and have a real meal."

At this she laughed a little, and David found the sound enchanting. He grinned back at her boyishly. When she had finished her meal to its last morsel he paid the check, tipped the waitress, and royally demanded a taxicab. At the door of the bank he left her in the cab's safe shelter while he cashed his check—an enterprise simplified by the fact that he had cashed his one hundred dollar check at the same institution and that the paying teller remembered him and the incident. When he was back in the cab with his roll of bills distending a trousers pocket the girl made her first suggestion.

"I might go back to my own room," she brought out, hesitatingly, "if you really are going to be good enough to—lend me a few dollars. All my furniture is there, and my trunk, and I know the landlady will take me in if I can pay a little on account. She really hated to turn me out this morning, but she had given me a lot of time, and, besides, it wasn't snowing then."

"All right."

David was immensely relieved. Now that things were straightened out for the girl his temporary alertness was leaving him. He felt a return of the odd, dizzy, dreamy, blind sensation of the hour before. He wanted to see the girl settled and provided for, and then he wanted to go somewhere and rest. He passed on to the driver of the taxicab the address she had given him, and, on a sudden impulse, took out his roll, divided it at random, and pressed the bills into her hand. As she began to protest he put his hand on hers and crushed her fingers shut over the money.

"No time to argue the thing," he said, almost irritably. "I feel queer. I've felt queer all day. Perhaps I'm going to be sick. Anyway, I want you off my mind. I'll go up with you, if you'll let me, and give your landlady the once over. Tell her I'm your cousin, just in town for the day. She may not believe it, but it's the best we can do, and she'll never see me again, so it doesn't matter. But I've got to be sure you're all right before I go away. Besides, we want some dinner."

Subsequent events were a little hazy to Henderson. He did not take in the simplicity and good taste of the girl's little sitting room, but with the last flicker of vitality and intelligence he did take in the personality of the landlady. He formed the impression that the woman was thoroughly respectable and not bad hearted creature, who was genuinely glad her unremunerative lodger had returned with enough cash to pay her way. Up to this point David conducted himself very well. Now, quite suddenly, he demanded a drink of cold water and began to babble in a way that meant nothing but which immediately aroused the blackest suspicions of the landlady. He realized this and tried to reassure her by speaking to her slowly and painstakingly. He heard the girl's alarmed voice.

"He told me he felt ill," she was saying. Soon he was again explaining something, this time to a man with a peremptory manner, who insisted on his taking off his coat and who kept punching his chest in a way that annoyed him abominably. After this he had a confused sense of voices and lights, and finally of bed and of racking pain and burning fever, and of odd processions around a room whose walls kept contracting and expanding.

At times he heard a voice—a familiar and beautiful voice, speaking sometimes to him, sometimes to

someone else. Occasionally he caught a glimpse of brown eyes and brown hair. But it was all chaotic indeed, until one morning he suddenly heard a surprising weak voice which seemed to come from his own throat.

"Hello," it said.

At the word someone rose and bent above him—someone now gloriously familiar, someone with brown eyes and brown hair. The voice that had been part of his dreams, sounded again, bushed, but oddly excited.

"Do you know me?" it asked.

David gazed with deep content at the girl who stood beside his bed. The last time he saw her she had been falling off a park bench; no, she had been eating soup; no, she had been paying her landlady. O, it didn't matter what she had been doing. What she was doing now was offering him something from a cup and tube.

"Drink this," she said urgently. When he had obeyed she repeated her question.

"Do you know me?"

"I guess so," said David. He raised something that evidently belonged to him and regarded it with strong disfavor. It was his right hand, and it was disgustingly thin and white and shaky.

"Have I been sick?" he demanded.

"Yes."

"How long?"

"Two weeks."

"What was it?"

"Pneumonia. You're all right now, but you must not talk any more."

"Am I in a hospital?"

"No. Mrs. Jackson took you right in as soon as she realized that you were really ill. Fortunately she had an empty room, and we helped the doctor to carry you there. I told you she was really a good soul."

David passed lightly over the goodness of Mrs. Jackson. It did not deeply interest him.

"And have you nursed me all this time?" he asked faintly.

"O, I've been in and out. Mr. Jackson has helped, and one of the maids. And the doctor has been kind. But now you must not say another word. Just go to sleep."

He closed his eyes. The next time he opened them the doctor was there, very breezy, and greatly pleased with himself and his patient.

"But no talking, mind," he warned the latter. "You've had a close shave, and you've got to be mighty careful for another week."

He turned to the brown-eyed girl.

"If he begins to talk to you, get up and leave the room," he directed.

She was an amazingly obedient brown-eyed girl. After that she seemed eternally leaving the room, while David caught back the trailing ends of his remarks to her. Finally he learned his lesson and lay watching her contentedly as she waited on him or moved about the sickroom. She was constantly feeding him. Some form of liquid nourishment was always at his lips. Also he realized with gratitude there was no restriction on her speech. She talked to him when she chose, telling him of the clear sunshine outside, of the bracing air, of the doctor's orders, of how, soon, he would be up and about.

On the third day, in answer to one urgent question, she gave him some autobiographical details. Yes, she was quite all right now, thanks to him. She was not yet looking for work, because she—well, it seemed better for her to be there till he was well. And Mrs. Jackson was letting her have her meals in the house, which was part of the new and surpassing goodness of Mrs. Jackson. She wanted David

to know she had all his money, locked safely in her desk, and she was paying from it his expenses from week to week, and, temporarily, her own. But she was keeping track of every penny, and the amount she owed him was not large. Now that she was on her feet again she would soon have work. Had she told him she was an illustrator? She was, but just starting out, and three months ago she had lost her position on the art staff of a magazine. But today she had heard of another position, a good one, which would be held open for her a week or two—

"Work?" he exclaimed weakly. "A position? What's the idea? Great Scott! Don't you realize yet that you can't take another position? You're going to marry me and let me take care of you!"

It was at this point that she left the room again. She continued to leave the room abruptly as soon as he began to talk about their marriage, which became his favorite topic, even though he was not permitted to make more than one remark at a time. Still, one could make those remarks tell!

It was on the fifth day of his convalescence that he made the great discovery. He had known all the time that he was not so well when she was not in the room. Indeed he was not well at all. He was nervous, restless, and feverish. His ingratitude for the attentions of Mrs. Jackson and the mild deeply pained those ministering angels. When she came into the room again, however, he was immediately better. He was even entirely well. He was strong enough to sit up and talk as he carefully explained to her. His greatest desire was to sit up and talk and be listened to. There were millions of things he had to say to her. It would take the rest of his lifetime to say them. Yet she was eternally disappearing through that door, and on the fifth day he had made the great discovery that she was deliberately keeping away from him. She would now hardly approach his bed. She would not meet his eyes. But late in the afternoon she ventured too near, and he caught her hand and held it close.

She struggled, but she could not move. Then she stood very still, and for one binding moment looked down at him. The look illumined the world for David Henderson. For a moment he watched it, glories in it, and in the color that slowly mounted to the very edge of her brown hair. Then she spoke.

"You mustn't talk, you know?"

"I'm going to talk to you all day tomorrow," he firmly announced. "I'm going to make the doctor let me do it. We're going to fix the day for our wedding and make all our plans. But in the meantime," he added, still holding her eyes and her hand, "it's simply beastly for a fellow to lie here on his back and not know even the first name of the girl he is going to marry. So I'm going to have your name right now. Is it Margaret?"

She shook her brown head and tried to slip away, but he held her hand tight.

"No," she said at last.

"Is it Katherine? Or Maud or Genevieve or Gwendolyn?"

"No."

"What is it then?"

She flushed.

"It isn't a fancy name at all. I'm awfully afraid you won't like it. It's just a plain ordinary, everyday name. It's—Dora."

"Dora!" He breathed the name after her, slowly taking in the wonderful, beautiful, incredible fact. Then, very quietly, he laid his face against the hand he still held. His eyes were wet.

"Of course it's Dora," he murmured. "It just had to be Dora!"

### Little Jimmie-- By Swinnerton

Well, if Here Isn't Little Cousin Ann!

